

Runaway June

By George Randolph Chester and Lillian Chester

By special arrangement for this paper a photo-drama corresponding to the installments of "Runaway June" may now be seen at the leading moving picture theaters. By arrangement made with the Mutual Film Corporation it is not only possible to read "Runaway June" each week, but also afterward to see moving pictures illustrating our story.

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SYNOPSIS.

June, the bride of Ned Warner, impulsively leaves her husband on their honeymoon because she begins to realize that she must be entirely dependent on him for money. She desires to be independent. June is pursued by Gilbert Blye, a wealthy married man. She escapes from his clutches with difficulty. Ned searches desperately for June, and, learning of Blye's designs, vows vengeance on him. After many adventures June is rescued from river pirates by Durban, an artist. She poses as "The Spirit of the Marsh," is driven out by Mrs. Durban and is kidnapped by Blye and Cunningham. June escapes, tries watchmaking work and is dispossessed to her landlady.

FOURTEENTH EPISODE

In the Grip of Poverty

CHAPTER I.

THE cold eyes of the dumpty landlady suddenly warmed. They had caught the glint of a diamond.

"Wait a minute!" she called. "I think I'll take a chance on you, after all."

The beautiful young girl away in the doorway. Mrs. Waters caught her by the arms, put down the heavy bundle under which the girl had bent and led her to a chair.

"You need a cup of tea," the landlady rattled on, and her eyes strayed nervously to the tapering white hand upon which glowed a sparkling solitaire. The girl also wore a bright new wedding ring!

The woman waddled away, and June opened the bundle of pants which she had brought with her and began to sew.

"Put 'em up!" the bustling landlady with a neck like a cresset cried. She lifted the garment from June's lap and tossed it aside. "You can't make a living sewing pants. A pretty girl like you ought to get a nice job in an office. Here's a cup of tea I got for you from Mrs. Parsons and a morning paper I got from Mrs. Kedzie. Drink your tea while I hunt you a job." And energetically she turned the paper inside out. My goodness! She had been about to drive away this beautiful young girl! And with that costly diamond ring on her hand and a brand new wedding ring! "I'll lead you over here if you want it."

Within two minutes more she had her new lodger bundled out of the door and on her way "to hunt a job." Within two minutes after that a luxurious limousine had stopped in front of the new home of the runaway bride. The door opened, and a man with a white mustache sprang out, followed by a dark man with a black Vandyke. They dashed for the entrance, but a noise halted them. The sound came from the back of the car and was made by a large round lump which clustered around the spare tires. That lump was the private detective, Bill Wolf, and the face which he turned sidewise as the driver of the luxurious limousine ran back to him was covered with dust. The driver, a wide faced Italian, grinned as he saw that the involuntarily faithful sleuth was firmly attached to the tire covering by his cravat, which was entangled in a strap.

"Well, why don't you help me, you big wop?" complained the trapped detective.

"Help you? Sure!" The driver jumped behind Bill Wolf and kicked him with a sound like the beating of a carpet.

"Scatt!" called the black Vandyked man, Gilbert Blye, and the grinning Scatt ran to him.

Gilbert Blye pointed up the street. There tore toward them a family car, on the front seat of which, beside the chauffeur, sat a handsome colle, June Warner's Rouver. The black Vandyked man whispered in the ear of his driver, and the gleam of joy came into the Italian's narrow slitted eyes.

Beautiful June Warner, more appealing than ever in her plain little black dress and her fragile pallor, entered the door which was lettered "Elizabeth Sawyer—Real Estate and Investments," and found herself in the raised off reception space of a large office which was alive with the hum of energetic business.

A thin, stiff-necked young woman came out and went directly to the beautiful girl with the plain black dress.

"Will you come in?" she invited with an unexpected agreeableness, and she led the way into the very center of this web of industry.

The family car stopped at the curb with a slam, and the colle, Rouver, was on the ground. From the car sprang the young husband of June Warner, his jaws set and his fists clinched. There followed the stern father and the gentle mother of June, her bosom friend, Iris Bliethering, and Bobbie.

"They're in there!" called a dusty voice. It was the well known and justly famous private detective, Bill Wolf, still attached to the luxurious limousine by his strong cravat, but no one heard him. The party had rushed into the dim hallway.

June Warner's eyes brightened as she entered the private office of Elizabeth Sawyer. That pleasant featured woman sat at a desk piled high with a litter of papers. As she passed the desk June saw, standing amid the papers, the portrait of Elizabeth Sawyer, a tall, good looking man and three handsome children.

As Ned Warner rushed impetuously in from the street a figure sprang from the dim hallway. That figure was Scatt, and, closely pursued by the party from the family car, he tore across the big vacant room which occupied the ground floor and darted through a heavy iron door, and the pursuers piled in after him. It was then that the dark, handsome man with the black Vandyke slipped from his concealment beneath the stairway, sped lightly across the abandoned banking room and clanged the iron door, slipping the heavy crossbar into its place.

Bill Wolf at last got his fingers unnumbed enough to open his pocketknife, and with this he sawed off his cravat just below the knot. He galloped straight across the street with a strange, sidelong motion and, entering a saloon, slapped a quarter on the bar.

"Four beers!" he husked with his dusty tongue.

It was not until he had swallowed the third one that he took his nickel of change and telephoned to Honoria Blye.

A keen eyed man with bushy eyebrows came in to see Elizabeth Sawyer as June Warner sat patiently at the window. He put his hat on the corner of her desk and unbuttoned his smooth, neatly fitting overcoat.

"Well, Mrs. Sawyer, how about it?" he inquired, putting his hands on his knees.

Mrs. Sawyer had been busy sorting papers.

"I couldn't think of consolidating," she said crisply, with a shake of her head.

"Sorry." The man had laid a folded document before her. "All right, you won't consolidate."

And the man's tone was regretful. "You're a very fine business woman, Mrs. Sawyer, and I don't mind admitting that you've made a real competition in our territory. How does this idea suit you?" He produced another document and spread it before her.

"I hereby agree to sell, assign and transfer the business conducted under the name of Elizabeth Sawyer to Edward Jones for the sum of —"

Again she laughed and shook her head.

"You see I left the amount blank," he intimated. "That's the only amount I'd accept at present."

decided the woman. She passed her hand for a moment over her eyes. "You see, Mr. Jones, I've given so much to make my business a success."

A tall, good looking man came into the room, the man of the picture on the desk. Mrs. Sawyer's hand had been pressed over her eyes. At the entrance of her husband she sprang up with an exclamation of pleasure, her face glowing, and turned to him.

The poor little runaway bride glanced hastily out of the window, and the tears sprang into her eyes. How she longed for Ned! Dear Ned!

Dear Ned was in a small, dim room, lighted by one high window, across which were June's father and mother and Bobbie and Iris Bliethering, and standing in the corner, with his back to the wall, was the wide featured Scatt.

Ned Warner confronted Scatt.

"You're the man; I want to see you," he declared, his voice trembling with suppressed fury. "Now, I want some information, and I'm going to have it!"

Scatt leaned comfortably into the corner.

"Will you speak, or won't you?"

"Hold on, Ned!" Bobbie Bliethering had caught that muscular arm as it was tensely drawn back.

"Let me try this fellow." And little Bobbie took

They both wrote at once, sitting side by side at the desk, he a check to his wife and she a thirty day note to her husband.

"You will get in trouble once in a while, won't you, Betty?" laughed the man.

She looked at him reproachfully.

"You know why."

"Yes." He nodded sympathetically, and patting the hand which lay on the edge of the desk, picked up the photograph. "The babies. Betty, you're a wonder! What man's business could stand such interruptions?"

She smiled fondly at the photograph and then at him, then from her desk drew a small blank check.

She turned to a page headed "Bills Payable." There were only two entries, and now she made a third. The dates of all three were about two years apart.

"That setback in my business was Harry," and with the tip of her pencil she touched the oldest child in the photograph. "And this one was Betty. Today's note is the baby. It has taken me a year to catch up every time."

"No business can do without the boss," agreed the man. "That applies to everything, Betty. You look busy here."

"Oh, I forgot to tell you," she laughed. She picked up the two documents which Edward Jones had insisted on leaving for her consideration. Her husband read them gravely and passed them back.

"Flattering," he smiled.

"Isn't it?" Her eyes brightened. They had seemed rather tired. "Of course the consolidation's absurd, but Jones would pay me a good price for an outright sale." And she pointed to the line left blank.

"I'll pay you a better, Betty."

"The reason I wouldn't sell to either of you is that I want to keep the business. I'm proud of it."

"All right." He shook hands with her. "A bargain's a bargain."

A boy came in. She had rung for him as soon as she had the check. She indorsed it now and put it in her bank book and gave it to the boy.

"The nurse is outside with the children," the boy reported as he turned to go.

"That's so." Her brow contracted as she looked at her memorandum pad. "I gave Mary an appointment. Harry was to go to the doctor."

"Harry?" The man was instantly concerned. "Is there anything the matter with Harry?"

"He's so nervous."

The nurse came in, carrying the baby and leading

"Great Scott!"

The little girl looked up at her father with a radiant smile, but as he rushed toward her she scrambled to her feet and ran, holding something behind her back. It was an ink bottle. He took it from her, and she screamed with all the strength of her lungs. The angel looking mite was a sight to behold. Her face was sticky with brown chocolate candy, the purple stains from the typewriter ribbon were all over her white dress, and the blue ink was on her hands. She smeared some of it on her face and in her curly hair as she cried:

"My, oh, my!" half moaned Mrs. Sawyer. "Why is it that child is always so messy?"

"Dirt just comes natural to her, Mrs. Sawyer," confidently explained the nurse. "Harree!" Her teeth gleamed, and she made a dash for the boy.

He was swinging on the letterpress again, and the water pan was tilting. He jumped to elude her, and the water spilled over a pile of mortgage blanks.

"You little demon!" screamed the nurse and made a clutch for him. Almost he escaped, but she caught him by the collar and shook him.

"D-n it, go to blazes!" yelled the boy in a perfect fury of temper.

There was a dead silence, in which Mrs. Sawyer felt the blood slowly leaving her face. Her husband was shocked into numbness. The quiet little figure in the corner near the window scarcely breathed.

Elizabeth Sawyer suddenly buried her face upon her arms and sobbed, but she raised her head in an instant. With a pale, set face she walked over and took the baby in her arms.

"Harry, you're discharged," she said.

Sawyer had drawn the boy to him very thoughtfully, but now he thrust his hand in his pocket and produced some money. He counted out some of it and gave it to the nurse.

"You needn't blame me!" flared the nurse. "I didn't teach him to say those things. The boy has a nasty temper. The doctor said so."

"That will do, Mary," said Mrs. Sawyer quietly. "You may go." She stood motionless until the nurse walked out. "Will you hold the baby, Harry?"

"I'll bet you. Come here, Buster." And he gazed

down fondly, not at the baby, but into the eyes of his wife, as he took the tiny burden.

She smiled up at him. There were tears trembling on her lashes. She caught up the curly headed little girl, took her over to the washbasin in the corner and vigorously scrubbed that chocolate begrimed countenance and kissed it; then she stooped down by the boy and put her arms around him.

"Mother doesn't want you to say naughty words like that." And there was heartbreak in her tones. A tear dropped on the boy's upturned face. He snuggled his head on her shoulder, and a chubby arm stole about her neck.

Elizabeth Sawyer was half laughing and half crying as she sat at the desk with the curly haired little girl on her lap and the boy leaning against her. She took up the telephone.

"Edward Jones, please."

"Betty." There was such a ring in the voice as neither the man nor the woman had heard for years. She held up her hand to him. Her lips were twitching, and her eyes were swimming, but she could not speak. She spoke clearly, however, when a tap of the telephone bell announced her call.

"This is Elizabeth Sawyer, Mr. Jones. I've been looking over your proposition of purchase." A moment of silence. She turned her eyes upon her husband. There was a new softness in them. "I might be tempted if you made the price high enough."

Another silence. "Now, now, Mr. Jones, you'll have to come higher than that. Make me your very best offer." Her face suddenly glowed. "I'll take it. I'll fill in the contract, sign it, and you may give the check to my secretary. I'll send it over immediately."

Her husband's arm was about her as she filled in the amount which had been agreed upon and signed it. In Harry Sawyer's other arm was the baby. The four members of the Sawyer family were clustered in an unusually small space for them. The husband witnessed the agreement with great joy. Mrs. Sawyer's secretary signed it with her notarial seal and went away.

"Betty." The man's face was against her cheek. "Sweetheart!"

She kissed him and rose briskly. She took the toddlers each by a hand.

"Harry, dear, let's go to the house and start a home!"

The office was empty except for the forgotten little figure near the window, and from that corner there came a low moan. June Warner rose unsteadily. Something dreadful had happened. The rock to which she had clung had crumbled under her grasp. Was independence, too, a failure? Nothing could have been more perfect than the mutual esteem in which the Sawyers had held each other, and in their love had existed no taint of obligation or of bounty. Yet through all these years they had missed something which now, for the first time, they were to find.

June was dazed as she hurried to the bare little room. She had left Ned to achieve her independence, as Elizabeth Sawyer had done, but June had not taken motherhood into her calculations.

CHAPTER III.

SCATTI in the deserted bank vault stood with his eyes lowered for a moment, while the pursuers of the little runaway bride crowded about him. Presently he lifted them to the ceiling, but they did not look into Mrs. Moore's on their way up, and he began to edge slowly along the wall again. There was a growl of anger from Ned Warner.

"I'll beat it out of him!" declared Ned and started for the extremely silent chauffeur, who jumped into the corner and lowered his head and covered his face with his arms. He was afraid of fists, though not of knives or revolvers.

Bobbie Bliethering jumped in front of Ned, but was thrust aside. June's gentle faced mother could not be disposed of so easily.

"Ned," she said, and her light touch upon his arm as she looked pleadingly up into his eyes was stronger than any muscular force could have been.

Shivering with the recollection of his passion, Ned put his arm around Mrs. Moore and walked away with her to the other end of the tiny room, while Iris Bliethering threw her arms around Bobbie's neck and enjoyed a few good sobs. Scatt, left alone in the corner, straightened up slowly and, raising his shoulders, cocked his head and then gazed at the cobwebs. Presently he puckered one corner of his mouth line, and there stole upon the pent-up air, soft and low and sweet, the melting strains of "Santa Lucia."

Down a cross street hurried the maid, Marie, her high cheek bones burning with excitement and her eyes red. On her way she had collected Officer Dowd, and he was a great comfort to her. She was a person who was particularly pleasing to policemen. A large and extremely black colored woman



the lead with easy assurance. "Now, see here, old man," he said, "you like money, don't you?"

A gleam in the little narrow eyes.

"Now, suppose we start bidding," went on Bobbie, pleased with his progress. He extracted a long black pocketbook from somewhere inside and opened it and fluttered the candy and orange colored bills and the pale green ones.

"Say \$30, say \$100, for just a bit of conversation," soothingly remarked Bobbie and separated that amount, fluttering it tantalizingly before the gleaming eyes.

Scatt shifted uneasily in his corner.

"For God's sake, man, can't you talk?" said stern John Moore. "You know where my daughter is."

CHAPTER II.

IN the bare little room upstairs stood the well groomed Orin Cunningham, twirling his white mustache and counting some money into the hand of dumpty Mrs. Waters. Gilbert Blye stood by, his black eyes glowing. He stroked his black Vandyke with his long, lean, white fingers, and he smiled his suave smile as Mrs. Waters, tying the money in a corner of her apron, pointed to the bundle of pants in the corner; then she moved the narrow washstand from in front of a door and inserted a key in the lock. She threw open the door, closed it again and gave the key to Gilbert Blye.

In the office of Elizabeth Sawyer the tall, good looking man sat down with a smile. Neither he nor his wife noticed or thought of the quiet little figure in the corner.

"Well, Betty, what can I do for you?" asked Sawyer cordially.

"Loan me some money, Harry."

"I'd rather give it to you," he said.

"I couldn't think of it." Mrs. Sawyer reached in her desk for a block of note blanks. "I shall need \$5,000 if you can spare it."

"Certainly."

a beautiful curly haired little girl, whose face was smeared with chocolate candy. The boy, a fine, hearty little fellow, came stomping in and grinned pleasantly at his father and mother, standing with his sturdy legs outstretched and his fists jammed in his pockets.

"What did the doctor say?" asked Mrs. Sawyer anxiously, and the father leaned forward to listen.

"There's nothing the matter with him," reported the nurse, with a toss of her head, and she glared vindictively at the boy. She was a person with wispy hair, an upturned nose and small gray eyes and thin lips, and the lips had a sharp downward droop at the corners. "The doctor says it's temper."

"Temper?" Mrs. Sawyer half raised in her seat, and her eyes flashed with indignation, but the father laughed.

"That's a matter of training," he observed.

"Harry, come away from there, dear!" called the mother.

The boy grinned engagingly.

"Harry." The nurse's voice. It rasped like a saw file, and every one, even the quiet little figure over near the window, winced. "Didn't you hear your father and mother tell you to come away from there?" she screamed, and the boy kicked at her, his face turning scarlet, his lips pointing in an ugly square, his brows lowering viciously. The curly haired little girl rose out of the corner, where she had been contentedly playing with a discarded typewriter ribbon, and toddling over to the nurse, kicked at her with all her small might; then, her duty performed, she toddled back to her corner.

"Mary," expostulated Mrs. Sawyer in distress. "You should not jerk the child that way. It only enrages him."

"He won't mind any other way, Mrs. Sawyer," retorted the nurse, her eyes flashing angrily. "You never see the children or you'd know how bad they are."

"Betty?"



THE VIVACIOUS BRUNETTE TOMMY THOMAS

down fondly, not at the baby, but into the eyes of his wife, as he took the tiny burden.

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THE DRIVER WAS A WIDE FACED ITALIAN

with a market basket caught sight of Marie from afar off and came bobbing as fast as she could waddle.

In a swift taxi came a vivacious brunette.

All these were centered around the destinies of the beautiful little runaway bride.

Tired and still dazed from his disillusionment, June Warner turned into the dim hallway of Mrs. Waters' lodging house, and wearily she climbed the stairs. Halfway up she stopped to stifle a cough which had been growing upon her since she had entered upon this struggle for an elusive independence.

She turned into her bare little room and sank into the chair. With numb indifference she noted that the washstand had been moved from its place in front of the door at the head of the bed, but she was too much preoccupied to wonder at it. She stopped to rest for a moment, her hand upon her chest; then mechanically she picked up a pair of pants from the table and started to sew.

The hall door slowly opened, and a young woman, her eyes sparkling, her cheeks ruddy with the flush of health, walked in, clad in gorgeous raiment. It was the vivacious brunette, Tommy Thomas.

"You poor dear!" cried Tommy.

"There was no place else to go," June said.

"Oh, yes, there was," said Tommy Thomas, laughing gayly. She fled from the room. She returned in a moment, and with her was the white mustached Orin Cunningham.

"Go!" June said and pointed to the door.

"You don't mean it," laughed Cunningham.

Bill Wolf came out of the saloon across the street, wiping his lips. There was a placid expression on his round face, and he had a short, thick stub of a cigar in the corner of his mouth.

A handsome colle dashed up to the well known and justly famous private detective, barked and dashed away, barked and dashed away again.

"All right, sport," said the comfortable Bill Wolf and followed the dog across the street.

Leaping and jumping and stopping at every few steps to look back, Rouver led the way into the abandoned bank and, springing against the heavy iron door, yelled his loudest at every leap. Whining, he crouched at the crack at the bottom of the door, and a vigorous pounding answered him.

"All right, sport," said Bill Wolf jovially and lifted from its place the heavy bar.

Instantly there dashed out Ned Warner, his jaws set and his fists clinched, and after him came June's father and mother and Bobbie and Iris Bliethering. Ned rushed across the room and sprang for the stairs as Bill Wolf grappled savagely with the Italian chauffeur. Around the corner came the high cheek boned maid, Marie, and Officer Dowd, closely pursued by fat old black Aunt Debby, while down the street rolled an electric coach, with the sharp featured Honoria Blye at the lever.

In the narrow bedroom upstairs June Warner stood, pale and erect, looking straight into the eyes of Orin Cunningham. For a moment he resisted her clear, steady gaze, and then he dropped his eyes, abashed. Suddenly he laughed, and, pulling from his pocket a dazzling string of pearls, he took a step nearer and flaunted them before June's eyes.

"Orin Cunningham!" A stern, cold voice.

The door behind June had clicked. She turned. Gilbert Blye!

"Go!" he ordered.

Without a word Orin Cunningham, cringing, left the room with the sneering Tommy Thomas.

Gilbert Blye's black eyes softened as he turned, and they glowed down at June.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

